



A high level of trust in authorities might result in people believing that preparedness for disaster is exclusively the former's responsibility

By reviewing 30 European studies on risk perception related to natural hazards (floods, heat-related hazards, and alpine hazards), Wachinger and colleagues concluded that trust in authorities/experts represents an important factor for risk assessment and risk behaviour (Wachinger et al., 2013). Previous studies have demonstrated that the level of trust in authorities plays a significant role when the uncertainty of the situation is high and when the lack of knowledge is present, which is the case with infrequent and dreadful natural hazards (Paton, 2008). In those cases, trust (i.e. relying on the experts' knowledge) is in the function of reducing the perceived concern (Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000). In the context of natural disasters, trust in authorities is important since it increases the probability that people will behave in line with the advice of the authorities (Wachinger et al., 2013). But, it is important to note that high level of trust in authorities can also have a negative effect on people's willingness to pursue any form of individual protective behaviour. Namely, high level of trust in authorities might result in people believing that the preparedness for a disaster is an exclusive responsibility of authorities (Wachinger et al., 2013).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Attitudes toward authorities](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Engage in activities and develop strategies aiming to improve trust between citizens and authorities](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 66\)](#)

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